

VIDEO TRANSCRIPTS

NPS – AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND OPEN HOUSES

June 9, 10, 11, 2009

New York City

BROWN MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Brooklyn, New York - June 9, 2009

INTERVIEW 1

INTERVIEWER:

...and protect the African Burial Ground.

PATTERSON:

My name is Oliver Patterson. And I think they ah (sic), can preserve it ah (sic), by forming networks of professional associations, churches and community based groups and form a network of support and um maybe even ah financial support of burial grounds. Certainly the most important thing is the preservation of the mind. For so that people really understand the significance of this Burial Ground to uh their history and the history of the world.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok, we have a couple more questions. The National Monument has had ongoing interpretation and etc. A new visitor center in the works and will open in early 2010.

PATTERSON:

Yes

INTERVIEWER:

Have you been to any of the interpretive programs? Have you

PATTERSON:

No I've not seen any of the interpretive programs.

VIDOEGRAPHER:

Please incorporate the question into your answer.

PATTERSON:

Okay, I've been to the Burial Grounds but unfortunately not seen any of the interpretive programs.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Do you have any suggestions for future programming and visitor experiences?

PATTERSON:

Probably quite a number. Seems to me the Burial Ground is important marker in history. As an important marker in history, you want the Burial Ground surrounded w/ educational information so that people really understand what the BG represents, what the period in time represents, how the whole history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade occurred, and what was the real implications of that forum, for today. So I think if I were involved in it, I would want to understand the historical context that surrounds the Burial Ground. The Burial Ground, the actual transatlantic slave trade and the actual implications for our society.

INTERVIEWER:

Recognizing that the new visitor's center will be open, should NPS consider develop different facility in future?

PATTERSON:

Well, I don't know if need to develop a building. I'd much rather see mobile exhibitions that could travel to schools, I'd rather see speakers, videotapes and DVDs that can be used by church groups s, boy scouts, human services organizations, libraries uhh.. a building is a facility that's important. But we have limited sites of real memory so this site of memory can only be visited by those close enough to visit it. But something like the ABG w/the technology that we now have can be visited in African, the Caribbean, and Brazil throughout the Diaspora. So I'd much rather see focus placed on making it a mobile educational institution rather than additional buildings.

INTERVIEWER:

Partnerships are the key to success of national park sites. They foster protection, preservation, understanding and appreciation of our most significant places. Which local national and global communities, organizations, businesses, and civic groups etc do you think the African Burial Ground should partner with?

PATTERSON:

Well the group I'm most aligned with is the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. It has over 100 million members. We recently two years ago, celebrated the commemoration of the Trans Atlantic slave trade. We have some justice projects that we're doing, ah (sic) one is coveting (sic) for justice so I think certainly the religious organizations would be one. I would also think universities would be another. I'm a retired member of the faculty of NYU and the City College of New York and (sic) I think those are important institutions of memory. The scholars gather and try and preserve those memories. So those two organizations I think. And then of course you have institutions such as the Schomburg and other significant institutions that preserve the history of Black folk and I would think someone like Howard Dodson would be important to be a part of the board or be a part of the network of the African Burial Grounds. Too often what we find is these institutions become isolated unto themselves... I would even suggest the wonderful Brooklyn botanical garden could be a part of it you know? The fauna and flora that populates much of this community much of it comes from Africa... the seeds that were carried by Africans. A part of the history of this land.. So, I would think the cultural organizations, educational and religious organizations would be three primary groups I would look towards.

VIDEOGRAPHER:

Try to incorporate the questions into the last part of what you said.

PATTERSON:

Ok...incorporate her question.. okay. well I think the groups you would want to partner with would exist at local and would exist with local, national and international levels and I would suggest a group such as what I'm involved with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, which has over 100 million members would be a group you would want to be involved in. I would think educational institutions such as the ones I returned from NYU and the City College of New York. And I would think many of the cultural organizations such as the Schomburg even Brooklyn botanical gardens I would think those three large silo organizations would be important.

INTERVIEWER:

The African Burial Ground National Monument is .34 acres within the seven acre national historic landmark designated in 1993 and within the larger NYC African Burial Ground and commons historic designated district in 1991. How should the National Park Service best work with others to ensure the protection of the entire African Burial Ground and if could incorporate that last part of the question into your answer.... How can we protect it?

PATTERSON:

Okay, I think the protection of the Burial Ground, the specific African Burial Ground and others burial grounds that are found throughout New York City and New York State, can probably best be protected by the involvement of the community in the planning, support, education ah, of the burial grounds. I would think that the partnerships we spoke about earlier would be very important in protecting and preserving because essentially in order for these to be preserved you have to have fiscal responsibility. You gotta have someone who's going to say this is worth financing at local state and federal levels and without community support, the likelihood for you to get that is not very much support.. And the more you involve organizations that represent families, that represent, their communities then the greater will be the likelihood with be the of the preservation of these burial grounds.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok I just have a couple of more questions.

VIDEOGRAPHER:

You're doing great! I should of known you were and educator...very well thought out answers...

INTERVIEWER:

How do you believe you can you best participate in the development and the implementation of the African Burial Ground General Management Plan?

PATTERSON:

Ahh.. well.. that's an interesting question. I told you I was a member of WAC, what we did was to develop ah.. Sort of partnership...it was called "sites of memory" and so ah...I would love to be involved...well I will name this is obviously an important site of memory. In terms of reaching out to the different Presbyterian, reformed, churches in the New York City area, that's certainly one way we could definitely be involved. The other way is I'm a professional educator so I think I know something about developing curricula and things like that. I have some connections and interconnections with the school system so that's probably another way I could be involved. I am involved in a number of the ah cultural and educational organizations. So.... Most of us have inter-connections which often aren't tapped into. So often, in institutions like this, if you don't get the right person to head it.. to be the leader, they'll never know what Phi Beta Sigma or AKA is because they don't know the community, you know what I'm saying?. So you gotta have the right people, gotta have people who know what "AME" means, so that they can interconnect within the broader community, 'cause really its through those institutions that we're all tied together.

INTERVIEWER:

One last question..this is it!

PATTERSON:

(Laughs)...ok you promise?

INTERVIEWER:

You're so good I just keep wanna asking you more questions.

PATTERSON:

(Laughs)

INTERVIEWER:

Are there other ideas or comments you would like the planning team to consider as we embark on this planning effort?

PATTERSON:

Well, I think I would like to emphasize the notion of mobility. I passed uh.. An urban garden right down the block when I came here and was probably put together with the Brooklyn botanical garden.. So they Brooklyn Botanical Garden has learned not to stay at their site on eastern pk but to build smaller Brooklyn botanical gardens throughout. And thereby teach kids science about growing plants, about watering about irrigation and I think if I would have a suggestion to make, I think forming maybe teen clubs around African Burial Ground, or around African history, or around African American history or around the Diaspora or around Africa you know? But getting kids interested in learning and providing environment and support and resources for them to learn and taking them on field sites like to the African Burial Ground, to um some of the places in Baltimore and other places...that's what I would suggest.

VIDEOGRAPHER:

Please ask him the first question again because the audio was low.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Gonna ask the first question one more time and if you could incorporate.. How can the NPS better preserve and protect the African Burial Ground? Include the question in your answer.

PATTERSON:

My name is Oliver Patterson and I think it can better preserve and protect the African Burial Ground by seeking and obtaining the support of the community and community based organizations. I think if it does that, there's no doubt the ABG will be around for a long time. If it doesn't do it you will not get financial or human support to sustain it.

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you

INTERVIEW 2

INTERVIEWER:

... We're just having conversation.

INTERVIEWEE:

Good...sounds good.

INTERVIEWER:

Alright, so my first question.. Let me start with this.. The National Monument was designated by a presidential proclamation in 2006 and conveyed to the National Park Service. With that being said, how can NPS better preserve and protect the African Burial Ground?

INTERVIEWEE:

Good afternoon, my name is Joe Coello and thank you for that question. Um one of the things I believe that would be helpful to protect the ABG and the information that's coming out of the BG is to be more inclusive of other nationalities, I believe that it is the ABG but I believe we would benefit more if our brethren from say Europe, China, um from Israel, all involve themselves from the children on up.. And the scholars, to basically take away from the African Burial Ground as much information of the historical content.. Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Umm... the National Monument has had ongoing interpretation and education programs and a new visitors center is in the works and will open in early 2010. What do you think about the current programs?

COELLO:

I had an opportunity to visit the ABG in early 2009. And I was very excited about the visitors center. What I took away from the visitor's center that I thought would be helpful .. Um there seemed to be all lot of younger youth involved from the grade school level, and possibly junior high school level and i think adding some component at the junior high school level/high school level and hopefully at the higher education level I think that would be helpful because all in all this history is new to us also and not something we learned when we were young kids and I think they

would benefit..it would bring a new delivery of services in terms of kids wanting to know more about there history, no matter what part of the country they come from.. we all take it back to Africa.

INTERVIEWER:

We recognize not all who are interested in the ABG will be able to visit the National Monument in person, so how can we make ABG accessible and meaningful to a student in Nigeria or a grandmother in Paris?

COELLO:

One of the things that, I mean some of the new technology we have now, video conferencing I believe would be helpful. I work right now presently for Medgar Evers College the Dubois/Bunche Center and we have sister schools in Africa that we deal with and that's one of the ways we believe would be helpful where we partner up with our sister school and even we have some of the youngsters come here on a trading basis during throughout the summer make the African Burial Ground a destination location for education for those folks coming out of Africa.

INTERVIEWER:

Partnerships are the key to success of national park sites. They foster protection, preservation, understanding and appreciation of our most significant places. Which local national and global communities, organizations, businesses, and civic groups do you think the African Burial Ground should partner with?

COELLO:

Great question and very timely. This year June 2009 is the 100th anniversary for NAACP. So I believe that would be the starting point. The NAACP which was founded by Dubois and Ralph Bunche back in the early 1900's is a critical institution for learning and social change in this country. We need to allow that organization as well as several of our historically Black colleges, and so one get involved with this. Especially moving forward with a general plan. I believe all our historically Black colleges should have a say in how we move forward.

INTERVIEWER:

Right... my last question. How do you believe you can best participate in the development and implementation of the ABG General Management Plan?

COELLO:

Well, I have kids that I.. We personally I have children...

INTERVIEWER:

Please include the question... in your answer... the last part

COELLO:

Okay.. Repeat that again and let me catch it.

INTERVIEWER:

How do you believe you can best participate in the development and implementation of the ABG General Management Plan?

COELLO:

The GMP for the African Burial Ground is very important to me in terms of moving forward. I have children of my own that I've been trying my best to inform them about our stay here in America and we're not going anywhere we're gonna be here so it's important that they understand where they come from. I'm also in the middle of trying to track my grandmother who's 94, her history, so I understand how it is to gather this information pull it together and how to get it out to folks. So it's important that we become part and parcel of the plan moving forward.

INTERVIEWER:

And was there anything else you wanted to add.. Any other suggestions?

COELOO:

Ummm...I would hope we would somehow have our youngsters involved a little bit more interactively. They do come to see an interactive space but for them to do things in terms of essay writing from the lower grades on up and possibly if the ABG could contribute to some kind of scholarship fund for kids in grade schools, public schools, junior high schools and college, that I think would be helpful. Yes

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you.

COHELLO:

Thank you.

INTERVIEW 3

My name is Verna Francis. As I will tell you as I move on, you will understand who I am and where I fit into this whole... I'll begin by asking the question as I understand that you're about to build a visitor's center. And I would like to know what are the components of a visitor's center and what does that really mean? Is that the beginning and the end? As an initial member of the African Burial Ground Committee and co-chair of the Federal Steering Committee an important component was the overall plan was the building of a museum. It would seem to me more comprehensive, and cost effective and meaningful to develop the plan and build a first class museum depicting the past, the present and the future of African people. As a tribute to our ancestors buried in the African Burial Ground telling their story. Educating and empowering those who are here today and preparing for those yet to come. You will recognize these three aspects as part of the libation. The visitor's center could be an entry component of the museum, but the museum should be the highlight of such an endeavor. Imhotep did it. If you don't know who Imhotep was, do your research. Why can't we? African people you can accomplish what you will.. most of you will know who said that. What's in your hand? Most of you will recognize who said that. So do it! Let us build a world class museum. As an educator, my vision is to utilize this space as a source to educate and inspire our children throughout all stages of their development. To recognize and appreciate their identity as Africans, to develop their creative genius with the blessings and to continue with blessings of the creator with the guidance of the ancestors to give to this world.

INTERVIEWER:

Any comments you'd like to add?

FRANCIS:

I would like to see as I said in the content of this, this was the initial plan by many of us who were involved in the very beginning with the all aspects of the Burial Ground and the remains. For those of us who from the very beginning watched the digging, we were able to get Michael Blakey to go with us to Lehman College where we found the remains in the terrible state. He advised us accordingly, through Alton Maddox he put us in touch with Gus Savage in Congress and we went to him and he was in position to put a stop to the digging of the remains of our ancestors. And eventually we went to, took the bones to Washington to be studied at Howard University and then arranged eventually for those remains to be returned and be reburied. And I was part of every phase of that. So I say that to say, that this means much to me. I gave many years of my life to see that this was carried out in such a way that it would be meaningful. I had members of the committee to come into my grandson's school... I only have one grandchild...to come to his school. I took the children to Washington, to Howard University to see the study that was going on there. So I have been a part of this and I want to see it come to a point where it's not "will this be stopped?" Or just looked at as "ah so they have something there" other people have museums, other groups have museums, we deserve it, we can do it we have the opportunity. Our ancestors have done it, we can do it. Let's do it!

INTERVIEW 4

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you. Ok.. my apologies.. What I need you to do is when I ask the question, if you can incorporate the answer...I mean sorry...the question in your answer. But for the first question before you even answer it, you could say your name

INTERVIEWEE:

Okay

INTERVIEWER:

That's all we need. Ok let me try it again.

INTERVIEWEE:

Ok.. Alright

INTERVIEWER:

Let me try it again...how can the National Parks Service better preserve and protect the African Burial Ground?

JORDAN:

Ok my name is uhh.. Reverend Alonzo Jordan. Ahh I'm not the pastor here at Brown Memorial but I'm good friends with Reverend Clinton Miller. And the question is how can you preserve and maintain the African Burial Ground for future, I guess endeavors and interests. I would say what the Park Service and what the rangers and so forth are doing now has been excellent. I came under or I became interested, through uh.. Dr. Deloris Blakely - queen mother Blakely, and through Reverend Wendell Forester and Reverend Herbert Daughtry and that mantle kind of fell on me and that's how I became interested in it. Ahh preserving... I would say I would say more outreach, perhaps, maybe with some national radio syndication and maybe more television media exposure and basically go more into the schools to the children, especially the teens may take more of an interest in the Burial Ground especially those of African descent.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok. Alright. Now the National Monument has had ongoing interpretation and education programs. A new visitor's center is in the works and will open in 2010. My question is what suggestions do you have for future programs and visitor experiences?

JORDAN:

Um.. for visitor experience, future programs, like I say...more outreach to the young people. We had uh...were blessed to bring one of uh.. our schools, the Mount Pleasant Christian Academy uhh...to one of the educational seminars you had there at the burial site which was very ahhh... was very educational and informative for the students as well as the teachers, instructors. I really don't have anything off the top of my head that could probably improve, maybe a little more outreach within the schools I think a lot of people are unaware for some certain reason about the African Burial Ground and I don't know what that's attributed to funding, or just a lack of resources I'm not sure. But overall I think

they're doing a pretty good job...for some reason I keep saying the schools could be more informed, maybe even part of the curriculum, if it could be especially with the college level...knowing different ones like Councilman Charles Barron, like uh the CUNY grad centers, having as part of African American studies maybe a type of prerequisite or part of the curriculum, would be instrumental in getting the outreach out for the African Burial Ground movement.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay...this is my very last question. Partnerships are the key to success of national park sites. They foster protection, preservation, understanding and appreciation of our most significant places. The question is which local national and global communities, organizations, businesses, and civic groups do you think the African Burial Ground should partner with?

JORDAN:

Well I seen in the brochure that we already partnership with the NAACP and they're gonna be... the Burial Ground is gonna be partnering with the NAACP this coming July at their national convention here in New York. Which is good. There are others that are there like the National Urban League, various religious institutions like Brown Memorial itself. And maybe more community involvement, maybe some of the community boards might want to have a representative maybe get involved that could be another avenue. Elected officials like I said Councilman Charles Barron who's an advocate from the early on... so and different ones, uhh... other than that I think that pretty much covers it maybe more churches, and maybe the religious organizations/institutions, especially those of African descent.

INTERVIEWER:

Alright well thank you very much for participating

THURGOOD MARSHALL ACADEMY FOR LEARNING AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Harlem, New York

June 10, 2009

INTERVIEW 5

INTERVIEWER:

What I'm gonna do is read the couple of questions we just talked about...but before your answer the question if you could uhh...the first question .if you could say your name before you answer it.

INTERVIEWEE:

Okay

INTERVIEWER:

And with the question that I ask if you could incorporate it into your answer.

INTERVIEWEE:

Oh okay, so tell me which one we gonna start with first?

INTERVIEWER:

We're probably gonna start with the ummm.... Let's start with the partnership one. The one we talked about with national, local and global communities.

INTERVIEWEE:

What number? Which number hon?

INTERVIEWER:

So we recognize that not all who are interested in the African Burial Ground, will not be able to visit the National Monument in person..how can we make the African Burial Ground accessible and meaningful to a student in Nigeria and a grandmother in Paris.?

INTERVIEWEE:

Well my name is Zandra Strother (sic). And um I'm impressed with what I see here about the African Burial Ground. I think there's a lot that can be learned by everyone. And my immediate thoughts about looking at this particular question about making the information accessible to people who are not able to come here. Of course we think about video right away, that's the easiest thing to think about. But we have a lot of other... um... things that people use these days like social network and I'm not quite sure if the government partakes in things like Facebook but I now I get pushed to use my Facebook account often by my young people in my life, so I think that's umm... possibly a good way to go. But I also think. But I also think we should look a little closer to home. Because those of us on the East Coast tend to think of ourselves as mobile and looking out and reaching out. I think we should ought to look at people in our own country who while they have some of the same thoughts that we have, they don't have the accessibility that we have. So I think the same things that could work for people in Nigeria could work for people in other parts of our country like North Carolina where I told you I have family and um... in other places, so that would be my thought on that particular question.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay, okay now, partnerships are the key to success of national park sites. They foster protection, preservation, understanding and appreciation of our most significant places. Which local national and global communities, organizations, businesses, and civic groups etc do you think the African Burial Ground should partner with?

STROTHER:

Well I think that's...a very comprehensive list and so...if you look at those organizations that are interested in educating the public just in general...and those organizations that are willing to provide experiences for learning rather than not just books and so forth, I think that you're gonna find lots and lots of organizations. Right away. You think of the NAACP and you think of the Urban League and those kinds of organizations, but there are many um...smaller community based groups that are associated with libraries so of course that would be one. I think I was mentioning that my book club is interested in doing some genealogical work after we finished reading some particular books that

made us think that as a group we could do more than individually. So I think that people who are interested in genealogical studies uhh might be interested..and I think we also talked about the fact that it would be helpful if this particular site could mentor other African burial sites that are being discovered. And people with growing awareness are learning how to preserve before they destroy. So if um...if it could be made known that you are available, then people would come to you. I don't think it would be a difficult thing to do.

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you very much

STROTHER:

Well thank you...thank you I appreciate that.

INTERVIEW 6

INTERVIEWEE:

Okay, my name is Delores (sic) Wynonna (sic) Nelson and I wanna respond to number three question, "what suggestions do you have for future programs and visitor experiences?" The African Burial Ground is uniquely qualified to tell the story of African Americans in this country. And I think they should begin...they should tell it in stages...from the beginning when it was New Amsterdam...and um...one of a person with the same name that I have, came to this country in 1642 when there were 150 people in Manhattan. And uhh...I thought it was very interesting because.. at any rate...ah... so I think this should be very extensively explained. Also history during British rule and then what happened when it became the United States and what happened when they started building all of the roads over the cemetery. I mean that's, I mean of course you can bring in all of the other material with it. I belong to the Afro American Historical Society and when I found out about this family having their history written from 1642 up to 1920, I purchased the book and this person had been active in the historical society in New Amsterdam etc. So I immediately got the maps from 1642 and just a few years later and see the African Burial Ground, how big it was. It

existed it was never lost. And in each map you could see it because it was next to the water pond. And then all of a sudden, roads started to appear across it. So there could be ancestors of mine in the African Burial Ground. Um, just recently I went to Alexandria in December and there was a cemetery in Alexandria, that the city of Alexandria just paid a woman this past year, 2008 to research a cemetery there. Similar to what happened with the African Burial Ground except they do have a record of...um, I think its called the gladden (sic) records of people who were buried in the 1860's. And so I'm just saying in general the whole story needs to be told because this country has ignored the contributions of Black people. And some, I mean you couldn't learn it in schools because they didn't teach it in schools. Umm...when I attended, well the first time I went to the African Burial Ground was when they had a underground meeting of the.. I think it was a tri-state meeting that must have been in 2002 they were talking about the problems of getting things in the schools. You'll never get these things in the schools because the people who took advantage of people have no interest in revealing all this because its not complimentary to them. And you know...I have been working on my family history for the past ten year and I have learned a tremendous amount but I don't want to take up your time. But this is really what this because you can't deny that the people weren't here...I mean it will never get completely in the school system. And of course when they had slavery in New York, a lot of people were like "ooh they had slavery in New York"..well I check out the family that I had the book on and from the first census and the second up until what the 1820, was the last because New York was like the other 13 colonies had slavery. So anyway, I don't wanna...

INTERVIEWER:

Could you answer a question about partnerships like who you think we should have partnerships with..

NELSON:

Well it would have to be someone who

INTERVIEWER:

Could you put the question as part of your answer? Like "I think you should partner with...."

NELSON:

Well... I think you would have to partner with historians who really know a lot about the history of New York.. I know there's a couple of books... fellow in upstate New York that's written. But right off hand. These are the people that... and of course the New York Historical Society has this information too.. But all of this should be made public.

INTERVIEW 7

INTERVIEWEE:

Testing, testing, ha ha..how's this working? Sound level alright?.. Okay let's see... my name is Jacob Morris.. Ummm.. I was responsible for the co-naming of the west part of Chambers Street where it hits the Hudson River to Frederick Douglass to commemorate his escape from slavery when he was 20 years old and connected with the Underground Railroad in 1838...and why? Because downtown, the Tribeca area was basically New York City's Harlem, before the Civil War... that was my first venture into um raising the consciousness of the community about its common history. Obviously downtown Manhattan is mostly overwhelmingly white these days. But on the other hand, ummm in extending the co-naming to the base of the ramp of Borough of Manhattan Community College, which is in the middle of the block between uhh west Street and Greenwich Street, which is really where Manhattan island's border really was in 1838 before they added landfill and extended the land area out into the Hudson River. Ummmm.. and I believe that BMCC is probably overwhelmingly one of the highest (I get such a kick out of this) "minority" percentage of students and graduates with degrees of minorities, which are not really minorities... (ha ha). But you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Would you mind answering the question?

MORRIS:

Yeah I'm gonna get to that... 'cause you know you gotta frame this..(ha). You know I feel my connection to the African Burial Ground ummm... is part of a larger story of uhh.... of the Black presence in New York City and New York City's history. And um, you know when I started to get into the story... well basically it was because, I was looking into the routes of the Underground Railroad, and you go into abolitionism. And resistance to slavery and economics of New York City and then you wonder like "why wasn't this stuff?" Which you know like for example, I considered Frederick Douglass escaping from slavery through New York City the good part of the story and that wasn't in the history books. And I was going "gee, why wasn't this in the history books? And now that gets to relate to number 1, number 2, number 3 and number 4. (ha ha) because it should be in the history books. Um... you see the way I feel about it is that of course it is Black history, but is also American history. And so the approach in my view has to be, "how is this relevant?" Always, we have to keep this in mind. We have to understand what happened, as best as we can. The good and the bad.

(off camera voice inaudible)

MORRIS:

Yes...(laughs)

MORRIS:

A large part of what I believe is that you can't have greatness without adversity. Ummm and so there was a tremendous amount of adversity. But that, many Blacks both before and after the Civil War surmounted tremendous adversity and did great things with themselves and their lives... that resonates... I mean my own son was complaining about how hard life is..(laughs)... and I say hey, "you should go through what Frederick Douglass went through... fighting to learn to read and to write using charcoal on sidewalks... having one book he spent 50 cents for practicing his orations because he wanted to be persuasive." So... you know it comes it comes from inside this will this determination to... to transcend... so thinking regards to the African Burial Ground, it should be in the context of this vibrant community because the Black community in downtown Manhattan was very very vibrant and did a lot of great things and actually controlled the Underground Railroad and ran its presence.. it had some white benefactors but the decision makers were

Black..so the African Burial Ground in the context of this vibrant Black community that had a lot of adversity but was nonetheless was very vibrant. So (reads from question sheet)... “what suggestions do you have for future programs and visitor experiences?” Um..I feel that um..to honor our ancestors is of course, very very important. But I think that bringing um..the existence of the Black community in downtown Manhattan to life would make it resonate more, much more with the people today. And so anything that does all of that and it should be all tied together. So with the African Burial Ground location, we have a location that has federal resources so it’s a base to emanate (sp?) Out of. Um... you know a lot of these things tie together... these different questions have different numbers.. But um .. You know...you know it’s like 4 and 5 “recognizing the new visitor’s center will open soon, and be in operation for some period, do you believe the National Park Service should consider developing a different facility in the future? Right now the facility is located in a high security federal building which makes it much less accessible.. In the long term, it needs a location that’s um, um much easier more normal to access physically. In the meantime, a virtual museum should be set up and nothing should impede the setting up of that virtual museum. With virtual programs and virtual curriculum and resources.

Now um...if you have a virtual museum, then that goes into number 5 which is “how can we make the African Burial Ground accessible and meaningful to a student in Nigeria or grandmother in Paris?” Or a kid in Washington DC, or Detroit, or LA?... with a virtual museum they can access the resources and presentations of the African Burial Ground through the website, through the virtual museum.

Now an example of what I’d like to see that I think will be very effective is art. And, um and plays. Um.. And I would like to see the people that visit produce their own art, make their own books and um, have their own performances to bring the Black community in downtown Manhattan before the civil war, to life. That would be transformative, that would be lasting... because how you produce art whatever it happens to be whether it be musical or dramatic and you remember it, and that’s the kind of learning that lasts. Like how they had to hide freedom seekers who were escaping through New York City to dramatize that... to sing a song, to draw a picture... that would be, that would be that would be really nice.

INTERVIEW 8

INTERVIEWER:

(Inaudible)

INTERVIEWEE:

Okay...my name is Innaca Ajudeca (sic). So what else was I supposed to say.. (laughs).. Okay

In terms of the National Park Service better serving and preserving the African Burial Ground, I really strongly feel that can be done with the development of the visitor's center that I think is to be scheduled to be completed I think early next year. I think that will serve as a major community aspect memorializing this great,, Ahh how can I say... this... oh I'm supposed to be looking at you... this great... tragedy that's happened in terms of buildings being built on this top of burials where the city was well aware that the burials were there only they acted as if they didn't know.. And crossed their fingers hoping no one would find it. I hope the visitor's center would really serve as an ongoing museum... maybe with multi-floors with different purposes where school classes and groups could come in and learn about the information, where demonstrations can be done, maybe some footage of the actual unveiling of the bones, the internment and the whole aspect of it beginning about 18 years ago...I think it began about 18 years ago.

Um... okay.. In terms of national, local and global community organizations that the African Burial Ground could partner with, I think the fraternities and sororities, college campuses, faith based institutions of different religions so that this story can get out on a national level, on a multi-cultural level, on various religious levels so that of course this is history relative to African American history but so that just like the holocaust, everyone is informed about our holocaust in terms of the African Burial Ground. I think that would really serve as a platform so we can get the word out so that people can become more informed, more aware because unfortunately even though this happened about 18 years ago, people I think on a large level, still are unaware that this is located right here in NYC, that it happened, what it means, and what forums like this mean in terms of the future and moving forward... (ok one more question)

In terms of tourism and educational partnerships. I know the tourism industry is a multi-billion dollar industry. When you... most cities for example, Washington DC, has a booklet that says "African American history tours". I would like to see that developed for New York City and for the African Burial Ground to be featured in that. All of the, you know, New York City receives about 44 million tourists a year. So if every hotel had information about the African Burial Ground, I think that will also increase the participation of the community and getting the word out so that at an event like this for example where people are coming out and giving their information it should be standing room only. But unfortunately people are still not aware or informed. In terms of other media ways for the African Burial Ground, some of the footage can be placed on Facebook or You Tube so that could reach a broader audience in the United States and well as outside the United States. Um so that and people can become aware that way. Maybe develop a blog with some pictures with the various open houses. I know the African Burial Ground has different educational programs... the "Day of Service" coming up which I understand is a new implementation. But during Kwanzaa... so that it can serve as an education base and outreach and preserving history of African Americans in New York City and highlighting our accomplishments in this area. (there was another thing I wanted to say but... you're gonna edit all this out right?)

So in terms of schools public schools, middle schools, high schools, I understand that... that part as well as being underutilized where I know the African Burial Ground does outreach they go to do free presentations, I think about six years ago, when I was a girl scout leader, I had a presentation done where at my site I was able to invite other girl scouts from throughout whole borough of Brooklyn. So getting the word out in that area so people can be informed so that its standing room only each time its open... so that if there's a presentation, then maybe there's a wait list because so many people want to service... I think that's it.

INTERVIEW 9

INTERVIEWER:

How can the National Park Service better preserve and protect the African Burial Ground?

INTERVIEWEE:

Before I respond to your question, I 'd like to give an introduction to myself. I came into contact with the African Burial Ground while I was living in London. More than ten years ago. And they sent me information very diligently over a number of years of... I have quite an extensive background. My particular interest as a physician is the remains of the Burial Ground, what protocols were used to catalogue it in relation to the history of medicine, and to the research that is and was being done on the grounds my name is Dr. IM. Spence-Lewis and I live in Ghana and I work with the Community Directed Development Foundation.

INTERVIEWER:

We recognize that not all who are interested in the African Burial Ground, will be able to visit the National Monument in person.. How can we make the African Burial Ground accessible and meaningful to a student in Nigeria and a grandmother in Paris?

SPENCE-LEWIS:

That question is difficult and delicate to respond to because in order to make it meaningful, one has to know about the culture and background of the people you are trying to identify with in respect with that you're trying to do. I think this calls for the assistance and promotion of organizations like UNESCO and the relative organizations in the country. In Paris, in Nigeria, in Ghana, I understand you do have some contacts in South Africa. With regard to the work that you're doing. So I think you have to research the particular areas.

INTERVIEWER:

Partnerships are the key to success of national park sites. They foster protection, preservation, understanding and appreciation of our most significant places. Which local national and global communities, organizations, businesses, and civic groups etc do you think the African Burial Ground should partner with?

SPENCE-LEWIS

One of the organizations that comes to my mind is the Community Directed Development Foundation. That's an organization in Ghana... they are very aware, with the community they've been established for about five years and they work primarily with parasitic infections and other conditions having to do with public health. And uh... remedying some of the goals of the Millennium Development Program. And they do come in contact with burial sites and historical burial places and they would have tremendous background knowledge. It is hoped that um, this organizations concerned with the Burial Ground can make contact with these various organizations. I have had some experience through the Ghanaian tourist board in speaking with people in archaeology and anthropology so this is where my background resources come.

INTERVIEWER:

What types of partnerships educational, philanthropic, tourism, etc. Should the National Park Service pursue?

SPENCE-LEWIS:

Yes... but one of the things I would like to punctuate is the comments or put them in context, is the fact that there needs to be a regard for the ancestral integrity of the Burial Ground. It is my understanding, I have no confirmation of this as of yet, that there are still remains in the Burial Ground. And one would hope that the Burial Ground is not open 24 hours a day to the people. I mean there is no burial ground in the world of historical importance. You can't find it in Europe in the military graves, there certain times when you go there...in Grenoble, in other parts of France, in Belgium, in Deutschland/Germany, there are certain times. You cannot go into Arlington National Cemetery anytime you like. So I think although you have a visitor service and so on the ancestral integrity must be respected if you're going to have on-going success. For example in the burial ground in Africa, you can't walk through those at any

time you like. They have people observing and watching those grounds so people can't go there and desecrate it or are not who are not aware of maintaining the integrity of those areas. And this has been going on for thousands of years. Even the Native Americans have certain protocols.

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you.

INTERVIEW 10

INTERVIEWER:

Alright... what suggestions do you have for future programs and visitor experiences?

INTERVIEWEE:

Hi my name is Lashonda Jones, resident of Harlem, New York. And I would say one of the suggestions I have for future programs and visitor experiences would be to um...tie-in programs with other museums or exhibits or something or another, across the country that have African American history of arts or exhibits or anything like that and perhaps do some sort of tie in where you can get visitors from those areas to actually look for the Burial Ground when they visit New York City..to actually make it a priority come to New York to see the Burial Ground because they saw something in their hometown.

INTERVIEWER:

We recognize not all who are interested in the ABG will be able to visit the National Monument in person, so how can we make ABG accessible and meaningful to a student in Nigeria or a grandmother in Paris?

JONES:

The one thing I keep on thinking about is the internet... the internet just makes the world so small...oh ok....um...one way we can make the African Burial Ground accessible and meaningful to students and people around

the world in Nigeria and Paris for example, would be via the internet. Anyone, anywhere any time can access the internet... and there are a lot of social media I think that would be of great use to the administration of the Burial Ground. Um...MySpace and Facebook are two that I'm thinking of... but I think like a virtual tour...a video of a virtual tour of the Burial Ground and the visitor center and so forth, uploaded onto a website or onto a social network... YouTube for all that, would be a great way of just showing people virtually what's here physically without them feeling as if they are missing out on this opportunity and experience.

INTERVIEW 11

INTERVIEWER:

...And visitor experiences

INTERVIEWEE (ADULT):

Hi I'm Ladeen Keening (sic)

INTERVIEWEE (MINOR):

And I'm Alexis Keening (sic)

LADEEN:

Ok... um what we would like to see for the future programs for the visitors to experience is we want them to feel more connected to what they are experiencing. We want them to feel like they are a part of it so they can get the feeling of what it's like to be one of the African Americans... well one of the Africans that came across. So you have any suggestions Alexis?

ALEXIS:

Oh, wait, wait, oh wait, oh, okay... for I would like for example, I would like to make like a museum to show like how they ate, and how they was treated and the type of jewelry or the clothing they wore as slaves... and the diseases they had.

LADEEN:

Ok yeah, the living conditions. And show maybe show more of how they may have had to share and take care of each other's children's or something of sort just to give us more of a feeling so this way we can feel more connected. I notice in other cultures they have something they can touch, taste, feel. So they can look back and say "you know what, let's take our children there". We need something we can take our children to as well so they can feel some sort of belonging. Where I come from and they can touch taste and feel and pass it on to their children. So I'm looking for this for the next thirty... well I hope to be here in the next thirty years... but my daughter can say you know what I was a part of this and made a suggestion and now... I'm here.

290 BROADWAY

Lower Manhattan, New York

June 11, 2009

INTERVIEW 12

Hi, my name is Sharon Johnson a New York native living currently living in Los Angeles California. I did my summer doctoral field work here two years ago. And am glad to be back after I went to the opening in October 2007 and glad to be back here to give some feedback. Umm... my primary comment is about the public awareness factor. Having lived in Los Angeles and having tried to interest African American press in Los Angeles in this location, I found that there is no traction. I think because this is a National Monument, the disconnect across the country has to be rectified in some way... so I think that if there's some mechanism in the office of public education and interpretation that can really get the word, and the purpose, and the history of this location out to the rest of the country, that would be crucial to our own education. Because I think people think that slavery is either a southern institution and because the Burial Ground is in New York that it's an East Coast concern and it's a National Monument. I think maybe our president could help raise the public profile of the location and the history. We know that African slaves built the White House and this place not only memorializes the slaves that lived and built New York City, but also memorializes the institution and memory of slaves through the country and across the globe and I don't think that's being communicated strongly enough. I feel everybody should know about this institution about this organization, about this site. Perhaps having some sort of venue for the public, I know the exhibition center that's being built, if there could be a corner that could perhaps rotate with public/non-professional artists interpretations, experiences, thoughts about the institution of slavery, ummm that would go a long way to keep the public engaged and connected to this site because there's 3000 miles between Los Angeles and New York and I think that would be very helpful.

INTERVIEWER:

How would you like to get information to distribute to people in your community on the West Coast?

JOHNSON:

Um... again utilize the public. By profession I'm a writer a television writer and a journalist, so I could offer that service of getting that out. I think relationships with the Black press is important. There are a lot of papers that are not making it, but there are Los Angeles Sentinel... and I'm doing a by coastal comment... but all across the country there are periodicals that maybe can't afford to pay a journalist but would love to run an article if they didn't have to pay for it. So if the African Burial Ground organization could utilize more people who have those skills of publicity and writing to get those stories written to get them out to the various periodicals, I think that would go a long way. I think it's a matter of money...umm keeping non-African American organizations, citizen, publications interested is also crucial.. Another thing I've noticed is that anything about slavery is considered a concern of African Americans... and I believe... Dr. Jasmine Degroy (sic) at Portland State University talks about "post-traumatic slave syndrome" .. And post-traumatic slave syndrome doesn't just affect slaves and their progeny of which we all are..it affects the oppressor and the oppressed. And so to communicate this as well, it also affects the relationship between African Americans and other minorities. When the slaves were "freed", the Chinese in this area had to take over the work load so that creates animosity between Asians and Africans. Its multi layered, multi-level... um I think more forums like this across the country. I mean we'd love to see Tara come out and visit colleges and institutions. That would require money so again... but I know someone in the president's budget's office maybe I should write a letter... I think funding to do that would be best

(inaudible)

I think partnerships between the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, the Holocaust Museum um... with those sorts of organizations that focus on the effects of trauma on groups of people partnering with them would help raise the profile of the African Burial Ground machine and bring it out of the context of that "New York" institution and bring it into a more nationally known more high-profile concerns. I'm just proud to be here. It was a life changing experience to do my field work here. And I'm just glad to be getting informed.

INTERVIEW 13

INTERVIEWEE:

You don't want my name (ha)

INTERVIEWER:

We're going to read the question first and when you answer you can provide your name. We recognize not all who are interested in the ABG will be able to visit the National Monument in person, so how can we make ABG accessible and meaningful to a student in Nigeria or a grandmother in Paris?

INTERVIEWEE:

My name is Olga Wong and I think the greatest thing we can do to make this Burial Ground accessible to Nigeria, Paris, Tel Aviv, Los Angeles or any other place on this planet, is through the internet. The internet gives us great opportunities to cut down the distances in this world. We can do it by photo, by personal experience and also by promoting this in our communities at home and abroad to show the great need for this to be told to the world as a story.

INTERVIEWER:

You're good. Now one more question. Partnerships are the key to success of national park sites. They foster protection, preservation, understanding and appreciation of our most significant places. Which local national and global communities, organizations, businesses, and civic groups etc do you think the African Burial Ground should partner with?

WONG:

The National Park Service now pursues a teacher's package you can receive downstairs in their building 290 Broadway. But if you expand this to send to unions, for instance local 1180 (of which I was always a member and still, district council 37 and there's a lot of unions in other states (Hawaii) and if you made this available to the management of the unions ask them to plan their trips around these and maybe in this neighborhoods, the hotels could give discounts for

groups of twenty and use this as a tourist destination and...and where the learning experience involved in it. And to promote what the government gives to us for free that we should really look at like the Indian Museum.. And many other things in the city just the beauty of looking out this window you see a park that's green against the many many piles of cement that goes extended into the sky and beyond. So if we promote this through religious organizations, our churches our mosques, our synagogues and magazines like Hadassah (sic), they would be more than willing to take your advertisement and give a discount. They may give an editorial story for this and I'm sure there are many other publications that would do the same.

INTERVIEWER:

Well thank you for participating.

WONG:

Well thank you for inviting me. and I'm very glad I found this in the Tribeca News. That I found this very interesting to be part of.

INTERVIEW 14

INTERVIEWER:

...And visitor's experience

INTERVIEWEE:

My name is Linda summers and in... uh... a few years ago the New York Historical Society had an exhibit a very extensive exhibit on slavery in New York. And one of the things that they did which I thought was particularly wonderful, available to the public free newsletters. I believe it might have been in conjunction with the Amsterdam News. The publication highlighted events of the New York Historical Society's program. I would like to see that same thing done with the African Burial Ground. I think its also important that there be a range of items and a range of costs. So that for example, a student, a school child that comes for a visit and has a dollar to spend, can leave with a

sticker, a pen something that commemorates that experience for him or her. As well as those items that can be more expensive. So someone needs to be sure that the cost factor be taken into consideration as they develop items for purchase.

INTERVIEWER:

Are there other ideas or comments you would like the planning team to consider as we embark on this planning effort/

SUMMERS:

One of the things I think we should be sure to include has to do with greenery and plants. African people came from areas that were lush in vegetation...there were a myriad of plants that were used for ceremonial purposes, for medicinal purposes, for food purposes. And as we move towards a greater understanding and a greater awareness of the greening movement, that we take into consideration that these people came from a green continent and then they came here.

That the time these people came here, it was still a green continent. If there could be a way, there would be garden... gardens that perhaps that could incorporate some of the plant life that might still be able to survive in this environment from Africa, it would be wonderful to have an African greenhouse that would have plants from the areas where these people came from. People could see that enslaved Africans were surrounded by this wonderful vegetation and that...we can't do quite that, but can bring a tiny bit of that. So that the monument isn't all quite stone and wood and stone ...it it... all those elements are important, but the element of living greenery I think in some kind of way needs to be incorporated.. I don't...a green house is just an idea...but just something that is a nod to the ecology that the people came from is important..and I think that's it.

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you.

SUMMERS:

You're welcome, you're welcome, my pleasure.

INTERVIEW 15

My name is Charla Bolton (sic) and I'm a member of the African American Historic Designation Council...which is an appointed board of the town of Huntington New York. Ummm...we're currently working on documenting of African American associated historic sites. And I'm commenting on an aspect of the future of this proposed center here. Um..and I'd like to say that I cannot emphasize enough for as much research as possibly that can be brought to the table. To me, this is the most important aspect of putting African American history on...um... and offering it as an educational tool. Um... we have a lot of speculation going on in any number of areas where African American history is concerned and I cannot substitute for proper documentation and the ability to find new history, new documented history. I do support the creation of the 9000 sq foot center, I do support the expansion of the National Park Services' involvement and physical occupation of the site. One thing I'd like to comment on is I feel the memorial or the monument or whatever its considered is wholly inappropriate to the site. I think the African Burial Ground is in itself an important sacred site. And in fact, the memorial in a sense, creates a disjunction from that sacredness. In addition is really a ... hate to use that word, "white-centric" interpretation of what is needed on the site. That maybe just a personal opinion, but that's just important to me. I feel it's jarring physically to go and see this thing. Ummm... and I think those are all the comments I really wanted to make.

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you very very much

INTERVIEW 16

INTERVIEWER:

...Businesses and civic groups do you think the African Burial Ground should partner with?

INTERVIEWEE:

Um... actually, I think they should partner with the colleges, the board of education and the schools, and um the churches. The churches are important because I believe that people from the churches would be more in tune with the African Burial Ground.

INTERVIEWER:

You know what, we're going to have to do it again.

INTERVIEWEE:

Why, what did I do?

INTERVIEWER:

You didn't say your name

INTERVIEWEE:

Oh...

INTERVIEWER:

Its alright... its alright... we'll do it one more time... if you could just answer the question and state your name first.

INTERVIEWEE:

Ok... alright my name is Ellen Lanier Fuller. I'm from East New York Community Therapy and I'm actually volunteering with um... organizing for American support for Obama's campaign and yes I didn't eat breakfast. And um... yes, and um... I am here because I have been volunteering with the National Burial Ground and I'm trying to get the young people to volunteer also. I will.

INTERVIEWER:

Which local national and global communities, organizations, businesses, and civic groups etc do you think the African Burial Ground should partner with?

FULLER:

I believe they should partner with the colleges, the board of education especially the high schools. They should get it from the very young, and the high schools going out and I think they should bring videos and what have you and,

come in and speak to the high school students because I don't believe they'll get it unless you bring it to them or take a bus, they take a bus and visit the site.

INTERVIEWER:

Well thank you very much for your participation

FULLER:

You're welcome

INTERVIEW 17

INTERVIEWER:

Okay ready? Okay. What suggestions do you have for future programs and visitor's experiences?

INTERVIEWEE:

My name is Angeline Keller. My daughter and I have done several workshops here. And it was so fantastic. The staff was very warm. I mean and being here with my daughter felt like home to us. My only suggestion with that is instead of maybe having workshop with families once a month, what about twice a month if possible. That way a lot of families can get together. With the recession that were having right now, its kind of hard to put money to um take the children places and with the workshops going on here we can still bond as family and talk about what we seeing, what we're doing and that would be at least one of my suggestions. My daughter Najaya (sic) is a she's twelve, she's a poet/writer and by taking her to so many workshops like this one here, it has broadened my baby's mind so much. Um... also instructors, if possible... and Ms Angele Raspberry, she's my daughter's writing instructor...she has um I mean she has tremendously worked with the children and I'm there with them, so instructors this woman has put out so much. So instructors please consider her Ms. Angelee Raspberry... thank you so much.

INTERVIEW 18

INTERVIEWER:

...Burial ground extends beyond the National Monument?

INTERVIEWEE:

Hi my name is reverend Louise Bonaparte, and I definitely have plenty of suggestions that will raise international awareness. First we need to start off locally and then take it to a national level and then we'll make it international. The first key is the children... if you get the children's minds, that's the key because then they'll tell other children, "have you heard of this?" Then they will go to their parents and other adults. We can talk to various organizations, local organizations, African American organizations such as the NAACP, 100 Black women and men. An anything that you can think of that's a connection with the African American experience. We can partnership with them those organizations and go globally with that. We can even contact several celebrities, African American celebrities but Caucasians as well so the public eye can see that everyone is involved in this project. And that its imperative that we spread the word. Because this is very very educational and it's a part of African American history and also a part of American history. And the word can get out by television ads, commercials. We can expand it globally by the internet making an interactive website. We can create booklets an brochures... and myself being clergy, we can have clergy members as well as volunteers go to the mother land to take information. And you can also have tours from Africa to bring them to the site. So both can interact so we can bring new ideas and artifacts. And uh... the whole key is team work not only with the African American community but with all cultures, ages and races..but being that it is an African American site we need to ingrain that in our culture here in the city. We start off here, we always start at home, and then we can go abroad with it. And educators you get to deal with this site... and clergy persons and I think that will expand globally if everyone works together in this partnership.

INTERVIEW 19

INTERVIEWER:

Okay so what suggestions do you have for future programs and visitor experiences?

INTERVIEWEE:

First of all my name is Claude Burley and I live in Florida at 184 Locust Road, Ocala Florida. And um it's just an amazing opportunity to be in town at the same time of having an opportunity and be given an opportunity to give a statement of what I'd like to see as far as the future plans for the visitor's center. First we were involved in the 2003 re-internment ceremony.. Myself, my wife, wife queen mother Moore, doctor Deloris Blakely... and we participated in the 20 hour vigil that took place in the evening after the uh main event on that day... I can't start to tell you how much of a profound and life changing event this whole experience has been for my family personally...what I'd like to say is we had initiated a numah ceremony, a naming ceremony for all the 419 of the skeletal remains of our ancestors that were on the earth at this site. And what we did was we made up documents and certificates for each one of our ancestors and at the same time we conducted a naming ceremony right down stairs in front of this building. And we allowed...we gave out names to the members of our community, who ever wanted to adopt one of the names of the ancestors, had an opportunity. I can't start to tell you the crowd of people that stretched almost around the block.. Of people that wanted to have an identification with our ancestors and adopt one of the names. So what I'd like to see is an exhibit with the naming ceremony being a part of that exhibit because it was such an obscure time. A 20-hour vigil started at about 4 o'clock and lasted it was an all night event, and for the most part the event was sort of obscure and a lot of people in the community did not know this event was taking place. So we'd like to bring this out into the light. I have the actual portfolio of all the names of our ancestors. At the same time two days before they closed the tombs there on the Burial Ground, we had another ceremony in which I was designated as the keeper,...well in divinity it is the divine keeper of our ancestral names, which I consider a high honor. So I would definitely like to see the name ceremony become a part of this exhibit and so people of the community can also continue to probably adopt the names of our ancestors and understand the significance of having a name-- a traditional cultural name and the meaning of

those names. So I believe it's a very important and integral part as far as the history of what has transpired here. And I just want this to get out the community. Thank you very much...blessings.

INTERVIEW 20

INTERVIEWER:

Do you have any other ideas or comments you would like the planning team to consider as we embark on this planning process?

INTERVIEWEE:

Yes uh..my name is Gigi Joseph and I live in East Point, Georgia although I am a New Yorker, I grew up in Harlem. As a health educator, I was trained in health education and planning health programs, I was real interested in some of the health findings that I read about for the Burial Ground and what they found out about the health of our ancestors and I would like for that to be written up and shared. Um...because as we work on African American health disparities today, people who are in the field are tracing our health disparities today back to the point when we started marching to the coast. Not just to slavery but the point where we started marching to the coast and are um...we started dying because...and our immune systems weren't strong enough to uh.. withstand just the different tribes..and then when we interacted with the Europeans there was other diseases. So they say half of us died before we even got on the boats. When we ask for reparations, we need task them to repair the damage to our health and so I think working with some of the reparations groups and some of the health groups, and bringing what knowledge you have to that process. And...um...the other thing I was thinking was maybe there could be some children's books, developed and...um...my granddaughter Mina (sic) and a children's section of the gift shop. So Mina would you like to comment on what you'd like to see in book or what you would like to see in a gift shop that would appeal to other seven-year olds.?

INTERVIEWER:

So what would you like to see in the gift shop? What would you like to buy? Would it be toys or a game?

MINA:

Mmmmm

JOSEPH:

What do you think?...what about stickers or something that had to do with the Burial Ground? Would you go in the gift shop?

MINA:

Yes

JOSEPH:

And if you saw, umm...say a doll, say a child or of a children of that age say would you want to buy it?

MINA:

What doll?

JOSEPH:

Well a doll of the children of the time of the Burial Ground which was about two or three hundred years ago..you know like what Addie had? Or a game?

MINA:

What kind of game?

INTERVIEWER:

A game that they would have played back then, the children would have played back then?

MINA:

(Shakes her head) yes

JOSEPH:

What about a book about the African Burial Ground? Would you be interested in that too?

MINA:

(Shakes her head) ummm hmmm

INTERVIEW 21

LADIES AT THE TABLE

FIRST LADY:

Oh ok..good..she's getting the camera ready...wait wait..i gotta think for a minute...

VIDEOGRAPHER:

Well what were you guys talking about.

FIRST LADY:

I don't know... What were we talking about... oh about tee shirts..yeah a couple of years ago, actually it was ten years ago, I had a poster in my office that had the Sankofa symbol on it. And it was purple background. And it was an African Burial Ground poster. Is my understanding when the work was still being done. I don't know the purpose of the poster, but it was produced definitely produced by the commission and we thought it would make a great tee shirt if you were thinking about publicizing because the design was lovely. Anyway... and it showed it on the coffin, it was like an architectural design. Somebody had sketched, you know, had drawn it... you know... Copying what was found on the coffin that had the Sankofa symbol on it.

SECOND LADY: (HAT ON)

We were also talking about a heritage walk and how brochures are quite expensive to produce. If we wanna have a flyer or handout, this costs money. And if we put it on the internet, for people who would be interested or be aware of this could just print it out on a personal basis...instead of having the finance of this going through.. Any...

FIRST LADY:

And as far as the heritage trail, the fact that it's lined with other organizations and other sites. Not only brings more recognition from the public who's taking these kinds of tours, provides additional partners to expand understanding of the site.

THIRD LADY:

Uh one of the things that we also talked about...yes..my name is Irene Moore and I chair the town of Huntington African American Historic Designation Council. And one of the things we also talked about is how to incorporate this program into the colleges and schools so we can get input from the professors as well as share the information with the students. Also the historic society is also important...important resources because they have information about, you know, different...the earlier years in the country. So I think that incorporating the historical society into this project as well as the colleges and the schools.

FOURTH LADY:

My name is Linda Summers and one of the things we were talking about earlier is I recently went to Trinity Church ahh...on Broadway and I also think that's called the Museum of the City of New York that's on Wall Street. Anyway, they have ohh...just dozens of brochures, sites to see in new York, go to Chinatown, go to Harlem, go to Statue of Liberty..go here, go there..just tons of very attractive colorful, glossy paper sites for all the visitors who come in telling them how to get to these places, telling them a little bit of what the place signifies. It seems to me that all these kinds of locations would be perfect places to have brochures that identify the African Burial Ground as a significant location in New York that one must see. So all for those visitor's bureaus that we have here in New York, particularly where tourists comes...it seems that we don't need to go in the direction of a toss-away flyer..but something comparable to the kind of materials that are given out for any of the other sites of interest in New York. I don't remember seeing anything about the Negro Burial Ground in any of these locations..so that is a project that people could easily get their hands around. Could probably easily get banks and other institutions to support um..because once again I think the research is easy, go to Trinity Church, go to the museum and look at the other brochures, who were they publish who put the money up for them, and then go to the and you send a proposal to those people and say "by the way we'd like for you Bank of New York, somebody, somebody whom ever to sponsor the same thing for the Negro Burial Ground" I think the money is there it's just that the um...mechanism for doing it and the intention has not yet shown up in a

proposal kind of way. We cannot say that people will not going to support something if we have not already sent them the kind of formal proposal that says please support this effort.

FIRST LADY AGAIN:

Um..its..it's very important to collaborate with the academic institutions particularly in New York but certainly elsewhere. I mean this is an internationally significant site and possibly for National Park Service to offer small research grant to encourage the linking of academic work with the interpretation of the African Burial Ground and the evolving interpretation because history does evolve in terms of research too...because it isn't "and stop".. When you do your book. You know, there's always more to be learned..so I think the grant support is key because there are people who wanna do this work but who can't necessarily do it without support.

INTERVIEWER:

You wanna add to that?

SECOND LADY:

Well not to that but something else...ah..in Hawaii they do Hawaiian language in school. Is there a reason they can't do a basic African languages here? Each because each culture in Africa have their own language. And one of the things the slaves brought with them from Africa is they divided the people from different tribes so they could not speak and communicate and rise up to the oppressors...and they sort of abolish language as a way of communicating, they just used drums. Through the drums they have communication and this could reflect from the arts and culture in the city....for...for Citibank has a foundation for arts and this could be incorporated into a hands- on activity for children and college students also. And children like to live history...its more fun than reading history. Thank you.

MOORE:

I spoke earlier, my name is Irene Moore and I'm with the town of Huntington African American Historic Designation Council.... but one of the things we should look at is what is happening between here and west Africa. Because that's where many of the tribes came from. So I think that we should look at probably establishing a linkage between here and West Africa...and maybe we can do that through the United Nations.

SECOND LADY:

There is a Jewish College here Torah at 123rd Street. And they have a very large Nigerian population, foreign exchange students to do their ab, bm.. This might be a place where you could have a director be a part of this. If you contact him on a one-to-one basis.

INTERVIEW 22

Because many of the people we were talking about never had a breakfast in the morning. That's a reality we have to deal with. Is the sound coming in for you?

Yes

Ok...good afternoon my name is Ken Finch and there are many issues of course with this very important site. And there's a very sensitive issue I want to address. The African Burial Ground is a cemetery; it's a sacred site... it's a final resting place...of human beings who were the early residents of the city. And we bear a responsibility to them to protect their final resting place. The intrusions on this sacred ground in the past and also the continuing intrusion have been a source of deep concern to many. Including members of the descendant community and some this is constituted a desecration. What happens in such a sacred place has moral and ethical dimensions that must be addressed or we will be haunted forever by what has happened here.

INTERVIEW 23

Hello, I'm Nicole Holland- Dennis, owner of ARIS architects, the architects of the African Burial Ground. And I mostly wanted to do this statement to let my young women out there know that there have been a lot of women, African American women involved in the design process along with the entities we already know of.. And um.. Just for your own sake and for your own knowledge that we were involved and we hope to serve as good examples for you guys. I also want to say how proud that we all are that we had the opportunity to be part of this unique opportunity to... to create and use our creative senses to listen to all the thoughts that everyone had for the Burial Ground and to ahh... to be a part of history... okay thank you...

INTERVIEW 24

Hi my name is Nia Carol Alexander Parks.. my birth name is Carol Conwell and I chose that name because it reflects the history and culture of my cultural heritage. Coming from Virginia found out a couple of years ago that someone in my family is Swedish... I think. Most importantly my traditions of the African continent. My grandfather was born in fort Scott Kansas, married my grandmother and of that union came Fannie Earnestine Parks who married royal Cromwell and his grandparents were Royal Alexander and Betty Terry's daughter Amelia.. married Royal...and Amelia and Royal had a man named Charles and Charles' son Clarence got murdered by the Klan in 1922. Charles' younger sister Bertha Amanda Alexander married my grandfather and they had a son named Royal and he had me in 1949. I'm a member of several organizations but I'm standing here as myself... a teacher passionate about Black history, a writer, a poet, a social worker and educator who loves to dance and was trained at San Francisco State University to teach and learn Black history wherever I go. I hope this video will go someplace because as my uncle Gordon Parks said... he was the youngest of fifteen children born to Sarah and Andrew Jackson Parks.. Born in 1912. I hope that by the anniversary of his hundredth year of his birth in 1912, that we can celebrate the life and times of Gordon Parks and our ancestors. For too long some of our ancestors have been shrouded in neglect and as the book "cultural journeys" says

where there's a quote on page 187 I believe, it says a history and culture of African people have been shrouded in very bad neglect. There's a poem in there called "the learning gate" and I won't quote from it. But what I want to say this. There are so many roads our children can't travel because the books aren't in the classrooms. I had the unfortunate experience as the director of a universal pre-k program to be told by my director that we had too many Black books in our classroom. According to someone in the Department of Education. According to another teacher I was told "oh we can't put too many Black pictures up, we have to be multi cultural." What I want to say in is this... I'm not angry I'm not sad, I'm just glad. And looking out over the fog today, they're gonna take off some blinders... and say that extolling the virtues of a culture and history of and African people is not to degrade those who were here before us, the Native Americans. But is to unite and say that until such time we stop degrading Caribbeans, or degrading Puerto Ricans, or degrading Africans, or degrading African Americans, we are gonna continue to defy what Gordon and Martin Luther King said. "We'll never be free at last, we'll never see to the mountaintop". And we come together the African Diaspora extends all around the globe. We better come together or we'll never be free at last. Thank you very much, I live in Brooklyn.